



Town of Arlington, Massachusetts
730 Massachusetts Ave., Arlington, MA 02476
Phone: 781-316-3000

webmaster@town.arlington.ma.us

Minutes 02-25-10

Meeting Minutes
February 25, 2010
5:30-7:00PM

Present: Cindy Starks, Susan Stewart, Ethel Doyle, Cindy Bouvier, Ellen Digby, Carlene Newell, John Scheft, Kathy Hirsch, Mindy Davin, Molly Simmons, Jack Flood, Colleen Leger

Attendees: 12

I. Welcome:

Volunteer Hours: members were reminded to document the number of hours they have dedicated to Coalition-related activities over the past month. To save paper and time, members were asked not complete a form if they are recording Coalition meetings only. We will use the monthly sign in sheets to document meeting hours.

II. Upcoming Events:

Volunteers Needed

- Community Forum Promotion: Coalition members were given a draft of the Forum flyer to critique. Posting of flyers should begin next week, and should be posted as liberally as possible throughout Arlington. Examples of places where flyers should be posted include: restaurants, gyms, hair salons, schools, churches, recreation facilities etc... Flyers will be available for pick up at the Board of Health, and will be in poster and leaflet form.
- Community Forum: Volunteers needed for various tasks at the Community Forum on Thursday, March 18th. Some of these tasks include: group facilitation, managing the resource and food tables, distributing forum materials, and providing general support around the program's activities. Within the next week or so, a final outline of the program will be emailed to Coalition members, which will include an RSVP for volunteers.

Events and Trainings

- MIAA/Partners in Prevention Workshop, Wednesday 3/31 (8:30-1:30pm): The Face of Underage Substance Abuse: Examining Laws and Evidence Based Strategies. Colleen will try to attend this to learn more about what we can do around MIAA policies. Other members are welcome to attend as well. Please email Colleen if you would like to register.

III. Updates from Working Groups:

Guiding Good Choices: Emily Vincent and Caroline Ress will co-facilitate the next series of GGC workshops. The series is scheduled to begin on Monday 3/15 and will run through Monday 4/12. This series was promoted mainly through the Ottoson Middle School (OMS) Newsletter and OMS parent

listserv, and it is already FULL! Given that there is now a GGC parent waiting list, we would like to schedule a fourth series soon. One suggestion was to target elementary schools and parents of 5th graders for the next workshops. Facilitators have not been confirmed yet.

Youth Council: The Youth Council will host a MADD training at Arlington High School. This training is not restricted to Arlington High School students. Other teens from the community are also encouraged to attend (please have interested participants email cleger@town.arlington.ma.us). Several teens from a substance abuse prevention coalition in Cambridge will also be attending. Kathy Hirsch and Colleen will continue to outreach to SADD Club members at Arlington High.

YRBS: Colleen summarized some of the key findings from the 2009 Arlington High School YRBS. A sharp decrease was observed in the incidence of current alcohol use and binge drinking, and a less substantial, but still noticeable decrease was also observed in the incidence of current marijuana use and drug distribution on school property. For more information, or to view the report, please email cleger@town.arlington.ma.us. These findings will be included in the centerpiece presentation at the Community Forum.

Police Enforcement: John summarized some of the planning that is underway with the Arlington Police Department to improve the institutional response to kids found drinking or in possession of alcohol. John explained that he would be conducting roll call trainings, and is exploring ways to motivate officers to, at the very least, document incidents involving underage drinking, identify the youthful offenders and return them to a safe place. In addition, John will promote the Diversion Program as a protective resource, and one that should be considered by officers when responding to instances of underage drinking and other youthful transgressions. John also discussed how many officers perceive MIAA policies to be more harmful than preventative, and for that reason are unwilling to take formal action against minors in possession. One solution to this problem could be to find a way that officers can refer youthful offenders to the Diversion program without alerting MIAA of the incident (and thereby ensuring athletes face disciplinary consequences without losing game time.) Coalition members expressed various reasons why they were skeptical of this idea. Lastly, John informed other Coalition members of Captain Bongiorno's plan to meet with Little League and other youth sports' coaches to address the issue of parents/adults drinking at youth sporting events.

Community Forum: Colleen asked that Coalition members use the remaining time at the meeting to review the proposed plans for breakout group discussions at the Community Forum. Included in these draft plans were four scenarios: Underage drinking parties in Arlington homes; Adults drinking at youth sporting events; Marijuana use among Arlington High School Students and Youth Drinking in parks and public spaces. Questions pertaining to these scenarios were included to guide breakout group discussion. Coalition members were concerned that these topics may be too specific, and asked if our goal was to get community feedback about problem conditions identified by the Coalition, or to generate an open and more broad community discussion about youth substance use. It was suggested that we broaden the group discussion topics, allow groups to have more say in the topic to be discussed (but restrict them somewhat to a list of topics addressed in the main forum presentation) and scale back on the questions. Members recalled that at past forums, groups were only able to respond to one or two questions before they ran out of time. It was suggested that we use an open-ended question like "what was most striking" about a particular behavior or statistic and "what do you think the community can do to address it". Finally, it was widely felt that community members will want to ask questions, and that sufficient time should be left for a panel to answer questions from the audience.

IV. Adjournment

The next Coalition meeting will be the **Community Forum, on March 18th**.